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A JAMAICA SLAVE  
PLANTATION

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## A JAMAICA SLAVE PLANTATION

WHEN Lord Chesterfield endeavored in 1767 to buy his son a seat in Parliament, he learned "that there was no such thing as a borough to be had now, for that the rich East and West Indians had secured them all at the rate of three thousand pounds at least". The nabobs from the Antilles were rivalling those from India in their display. The sugar islands were the most cherished of the imperial possessions, and the sugar estates were the greatest and most famous industrial enterprises in the world. Bulky descriptions of the West Indian régime, of an excellence never attained by the accounts of the continental colonies, found sale in large editions, and few were the moneyed men of England who felt no stir at the rumors of Jamaica planters' profits. But Jamaica's heyday was already waning, for her soils were becoming depleted and sugar prices had fallen. Of the three chief writers on Jamaica in the later eighteenth century, Long, Edwards, and Beckford, the two last illustrated in their own lives the extremes of planters' fortunes. Edwards was one of the nabobs who sat in the British House of Commons, but Beckford wrote his *Descriptive Account of Jamaica* in the Fleet prison where he lay in 1790, an insolvent debtor at the end of a planting career. These general works have left little to be desired except the intimate details which might be drawn only from the routine working of individual plantations. Records of this kind are of course exceedingly few; but we are not wholly bereft.

Rose Price, Esquire, was the manager of Worthy Park plantation and its outlying properties in St. John's parish, Jamaica, belonging to "Robert Price of Penzance in the Kingdom of Great Britain Esquire"; and Rose Price had an eye to the edification of posterity. Seeing that "the Books of Estates are the only Records by which future Generations can inform themselves of the management of Plantations", he set down directions in detail for the making and preservation of elaborate accounts of current operations. The special books for the sugar mill, the rum distillery, the commissary, and the field-labor routine, which he ordered kept, have apparently been lost; but the "great plantation book" for the years from 1792 to 1796 inclusive has survived and come to my hands. This comprises yearly inventories, records of the increase and decrease of slaves and draught animals, vestry returns, salary lists, vouchers,

crop summaries, and accounts of the receipt and distribution of implements, clothing, food-stuffs, and other supplies.<sup>1</sup>

This plantation, which in its organization and experience appears to have been fully typical of the estates of the largest scale, lay near the centre of the island, perhaps twenty miles from the sea, on the rugged southern slope of the mountain chain. One of its dependencies was Spring Garden "cattle pen", lying higher on a near-by mountainside and serving as a place of recuperation for slaves and cattle as well as yielding a few oxen and some food-stuffs for the plantation. The other was Mickleton, presumably a farmstead used as a relay station for the teams hauling sugar and rum to Port Henderson, where they were embarked for Kingston on the way to market at London. The plantation itself probably contained several thousand acres, of which about 560 were in sugar-cane, several score in guinea-grass for grazing, and a few in plantain and cocoa groves, while the rest was in woodland with occasional clearings where the negro families cultivated their own food crops in their hours of release from gang labor.

A cane field was not ripe for its first harvest (the "plant cane") until the second winter after its planting. When the stalks were then cut, new shoots ("ratoons") would spring up from the old roots and yield a diminished second crop the next winter, and so on for several years more, the output steadily growing smaller. After the fourth crop, according to the routine on Worthy Park, the field was planted anew. Thus in any year, while 560 acres were in constant cultivation, about one-fifth of the fields were freshly planted and four-fifths were harvested.

The slaves on the estate at the beginning of 1792 numbered 355, of whom 150 constituted the main field gangs; thirty-four were artificers and gang foremen; forty were watchmen, gardeners, and cattle tenders; thirteen were in the hospital corps; twenty-two were on the domestic staff; twenty-four girls and boys made up the "grass gang"; thirty-nine were young children; and thirty-three were invalids and superannuated. From the absence of indications that any of these were freshly imported Africans it may be assumed that all were seasoned negroes. The draught animals comprised eighty mules and one hundred and forty oxen. The stock of slaves was

<sup>1</sup> I am not acquainted with the history of this document beyond the fact that it came into my possession through an auction sale in New York a few years ago. The book, which measures twelve by eight inches, contains about five hundred pages of brittle paper, similar in texture to the modern product of wood-pulp, though with a somewhat oily quality. The accounts which fill the volume were made in excellent form. A few of the pages which were ruled into columns are now completely split into strips, however, and a number of others are more or less broken.

not adequate for the full routine of the plantation, for in this year "jobbing gangs" from the outside were employed at a cost of £1832, reckoned probably in Jamaica currency which stood at thirty per cent. discount. The jobbing contracts were recorded at rates from 2s.6d. to 3s. per laborer per day.

During the year the proprietor began to make great additions to his working force, with a view apparently to dispensing with the services of jobbing gangs. In March he bought ten new Africans, five men and five women; and in October ninety more, comprising twenty-five men, twenty-seven women, sixteen boys, sixteen girls, and six children, all new Congoes. In 1793 he added eighty-one more, fifty-one males and thirty females, part Congoes and part Coromantees, and nearly all of them about eighteen to twenty years old.

The advice of experienced planters was entirely opposed to such a proceeding as this. Edward Long, for example, had written:

The introduction of too many recruits at once has sometimes proved fatal to them. It is very evident, that a small number can be much easier and better provided for, lodged, fed, and taken care of, than a multitude. The planter therefore, who buys only eight or ten at a time, will in the end derive more advantage from them, than the planter who buys thirty; for, by the greater leisure and attention in his power to bestow upon them, he will greatly lessen the ordinary chances against their life, and the sooner prepare them for an effectual course of labour. The comparison, indeed, founded upon fact and observation, is, that, at the end of three years, the former may possibly have lost one fifth, but the other will most probably have lost one half, of their respective numbers.<sup>2</sup>

All of the island authorities who wrote on the subject endorsed these precepts, but the Worthy Park administration was nothing daunted thereby. Thirty new huts were built; special cooks and nurses were detailed for the service of the new negroes; and quantities of special food-stuffs were bought—yams, plantains, flour, fresh and salt fish, and fresh beef heads, tongues, hearts, and bellies; but it is not surprising to find that the next outlay for equipment was for a large new hospital in 1794, costing £341 for building its brick walls alone. The emergency became pressing. Some of the newcomers, as was common in such case, developed yaws, a chronic and contagious African disease of the blood and skin closely akin to syphilis. These had to be lodged in an isolation hospital tended by a special nurse and cook, and worked, when worked at all, in a separate gang under a separate foreman. But yaws was a trifle as compared with dysentery—the "bloody flux" as it was then called. Pleurisy, pneumonia, fever, and dropsy had also to be reckoned with.

<sup>2</sup> Long, *The History of Jamaica* (London, 1744), II. 435.



About fifty of the new negroes were quartered for several years in a sort of hospital camp at Spring Garden, where the work for even the able-bodied was much lighter than on Worthy Park.

One of the new negroes died in 1792, and another the next year. With the spring of 1794 the period of heavy mortality began. Two pages of the record for this year are broken and partly missing. From the pages and fragments remaining it may be gathered that the total of the year's deaths was fifty-two (thirty-seven males and fifteen females) of which at least thirty-one were new negroes. One of the new women died in child-bed, one of the men died of a brain disorder, one of a paralytic stroke, and two were thought to have killed themselves. Virtually all the other deaths of newcomers were due to dysentery. By 1795 this disease was no longer epidemic. In that year the total of deaths was twenty-three, including at least five new negroes, two of these dying from dirt-eating,<sup>3</sup> one from yaws, and two from ulcers. The three years of the seasoning period were now ended, with about three-fourths of the number imported still alive. This loss was perhaps less than was usual in such cases; but it demonstrates the strength of shock involved in the transplantation from Africa, even after the severities of the "middle passage" had been survived, and after the most debilitated negroes had been culled out at the ports. In 1796 the new negroes were no longer discriminated in the mortality record. The total of deaths for the year was twenty-three, of which eight were from old age and decline, seven from dropsy, two each from fever, dysentery, and poison, one from consumption, and one from yaws. The outlay for jobbing gangs declined to £1374 in 1793 and to £506 in 1794. It rose to £632 in 1795, but disappeared in the final year of the record.

<sup>3</sup> Of the "fatal habit of eating dirt", Thomas Roughley, who on his title-page described himself as "nearly twenty years a sugar planter in Jamaica", wrote in his *Planter's Guide* (London, 1823, pp. 118-120): "Nothing is more horribly disgusting, nothing more to be dreaded, nothing exhibiting a more heart-rending, ghastly spectacle, than a negro child possessed of this malady. Such is the craving appetite for this abominable custom that few, either children or adults, can be broken of it when once they begin to taste and swallow its insidious, slow poison. For if by incessant care, watchfulness, or keeping them about the dwelling house, giving them abundance of the best nourishing food, stomachic medicines, and kind treatment, it is possible to counteract the effects and habit of it for some time, the creature will be found wistfully and irresistibly to steal an opportunity of procuring and swallowing the deadly substance. The symptoms arising from it are a shortness of breathing, almost perpetual languor, irregular throbbing, weak pulse, a horrid cadaverous aspect, the lips and whites of the eyes a deadly pale (the sure signs of malady in the negro), the tongue thickly covered with scurf, violent palpitation of the heart, inordinate swelled belly, the legs and arms reduced in size and muscle, the whole appearance of the body becomes a dirty yellow, the flesh a quivering, pellucid jelly. The creature sinks into total indifference, insensible to everything around it, till death at last declares his victory in its dissolution."

The list of slaves made at the beginning of 1794 is the only one in which full data are preserved as to ages, colors, health, and occupations. The ages given were of course in many cases mere approximations. The "great house negroes" head the list, fourteen in number. Four of these were "housekeepers", of whom two were forty-year-old women of "sambo" color, *i. e.*, between mulatto and black, and the other two were mulatto girls of nineteen and eight years. There were three waiting boys, twenty, nineteen, and ten years old, one of them black and two mulatto. Susannah, black, fifty-five years old, and Joanny, sambo, twenty-six, were washerwomen; Penzance, black, fifty, was the cook; Spain, forty-five but not able-bodied, and Old Lucy, sixty, both black, were gardeners; and Old Tom, black, fifty, had the task of carrying grass. Quadroon Lizette, who had been hired out for several years to Peter Douglas, the owner of a jobbing gang, was manumitted during this year.

The slaves listed at the overseer's house, forty-two in number, included domestic servants, the hospital corps, and a group in industrial pursuits. Fanny, twenty-seven, mulatto, Harodine, twenty-four, sambo, and Sychie, black, sixty, who was troubled with the bone ache, were housekeepers; Peggy and Sally, mulatto girls of thirteen and fourteen, were "simstresses"; Jenny, forty-one, black, and Nancy, nineteen, mulatto, were washerwomen; Esther, thirty-five, black, was cook; and Harry, twenty-one, John, fifteen, and Richmond, fourteen, all black, were waiting boys. In the nursing and industrial groups all were black except one mulatto boy of ten years, a hog tender. Will Morris, the "black doctor", headed the hospital corps; Henrietta, sixty, was midwife; Dolly, thirty-six, and Sally, twenty-eight, were hospital nurses; Douglas, sixty, Grace, sixty, Emma, forty-five, and Blind Olive, thirty, tended the new negroes; Cimbrie, sixty-five, Old Molly, sixty, and Old Beneba were in charge of young children; and Old Sylvia, sixty, was field nurse for the suckling children of the women in the gangs. Abba, forty, who had lost a hand, and Flora were cooks to the "big gang", and Bessey, forty, cook to the second gang. Prince, thirty-five, who had elephantiasis, was a groom; Yellow's Cuba and Peg's Nancy, both sixty, had charge of the poultry house; Dontcare, forty, and Solomon, twenty-three, the one ruptured and the other "distempered", were hog tenders, along with Robert the mulatto boy above mentioned; Quashy Prapra and Abba's Moll, sixty-five and sixty, mended pads; and Quamina, forty, and six others, sixty to sixty-five, gathered grass and hog feed.

Next are listed the watchmen, thirty-one in number, ranging from twenty-seven to seventy-five years in age, and all black but the



mulatto foreman. Only six were described as able-bodied. Among the disabilities mentioned were a bad sore leg, a broken back, lameness, partial blindness, distemper, weakness, and cocobeas. The number in this night-watch was apparently not unusual. When the cane crop was green it might be severely damaged by the invasion of hungry cattle, and when it approached maturity a spark might set the fields into conflagration. A law of Barbados, in precaution against fire, prohibited the smoking of tobacco on paths bordering cane-fields.

A considerable number of the negroes already mentioned were in such condition that little work could be required of them. Those completely laid off were nine superannuated, two men and seven women ranging from seventy to eighty-five years old; four invalids, fourteen to thirty-five years old; and three women relieved of work, as by law required, for having reared six children each.

✓ Among the tradesmen, virtually all the blacks were stated to be fit for field work, but the five mulattoes and the one quadroon, though mostly youthful and healthy, were described as not fit for the field. There were eleven carpenters, eight coopers, four sawyers, two blacksmiths, three masons, and twelve cattlemen, each squad with a foreman; and there were two ratcatchers. The tradesmen were all in early manhood or middle age except Old Quashy, the head carpenter, Old England, a sawyer, and Poole, Teckford, and Boot Cudjoe, cattlemen, who were from sixty to sixty-five, and Reeves and Little Sam, cattle boys, of fifteen and fourteen years.

The two ratcatchers followed an essential trade. Beckford wrote in his account of sugar-cane culture:

The rats are very great enemies to this plant, but particularly in proportion to its advance to ripeness. It will hardly be credited how very numerous these reptiles are in the Island of Jamaica, and what destruction, especially if the canes be lodged [*i. e.*, fallen to the ground], they annually commit upon a plantation: in a not less proportion do they injure the crops than a diminution of five hogsheads of sugar in every hundred, without adding much in proportion, by those that are tainted, to the increase of rum. Many and unremitting endeavours are daily put in practice for their extirpation. . . . Great numbers are taken off by poison immediately after the crop, and when their natural food is apparently exhausted; many are killed by dogs; and prodigious quantities destroyed by the negroes in the fields, when the canes are cut; and such innumerable proportions by the watchmen who are dispersed over the different parts of the plantation, to protect them from general trespass, and the particular destruction of these animals, that I was informed by a man of observation and veracity, that upon the estate of which, as overseer, he had charge, not less than nine and thirty thousand were caught by the latter, and, if I remember right, in the short space of five or six months.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Beckford, *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1790), I. 55, 56.

In the "weeding gang", a sort of industrial kindergarten in which most of the children from five to eight years old were kept, as much for control as for achievement, there were twenty pick-aninnies, all black, under Mirtilla as "driveress", who had borne and lost seven children of her own. Thirty-nine children were too young for the weeding gang, at least six of whom were quadroons. Two of these children, Joanne's Henry Richards, quadroon, and Joanne's Valentina, whose color is not stated, were manumitted in 1795.

Fifty-five, all new negroes except Darby the foreman, and, including Blossom the infant daughter of one of the women, comprised the Spring Garden squad. Nearly all of these were twenty or twenty-one years old. The men included Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Burke, Fox, Milton, Spencer, Hume, and Sheridan; the women, Spring, Summer, July, Bashfull, Virtue, Frolic, Gamesome, Lady, Madame, Dutchess, Mirtle, and Cowslip. Seventeen of the number died within the year.

The "big gang" on Worthy Park numbered 137, comprising sixty-four men from nineteen to sixty years old and seventy-three women of from nineteen to fifty years, though but four of the women and nine of the men, including Quashy, sixty, the "head driver" or foreman, were past forty years. The gang included Douglas Cuffee, forty, "head home wainman", May, twenty-three, "head road wainman" and ploughman, McGregor, forty, head muleman, McPherson, forty, McAllister, forty, and France, twenty-five, distillers, Tim's Cubena, forty, boiler, McDonald and McKein, each forty-five, sugar potters, and Raphael and Forest, each twenty-five, "sugar guards" for the wagons carrying the crop to port. All members of the gang were described as healthy, able-bodied, and black. It was this battalion of the stalwart, armed with hoes and "bills" (sugar knives), whose work would "make or break" the proprietor. A considerable number in the gang were new negroes, but only seven of the whole died in this year of heaviest mortality.

The "second gang", employed in a somewhat lighter routine under Sharper, fifty, as foreman, comprised forty women, and twenty-seven men ranging from fifteen to sixty years old, all black. While most of them were healthy, five were consumptive, four were ulcerated, one was "inclined to be bloated", one was "very weak", and Pheba was "healthy but worthless". Eleven of this gang died within the year.

Finally, in the third or "small gang", for yet lighter work under Baddy as driveress with Old Robin, sixty, as assistant, were listed sixty-eight boys and girls, all black, mostly between twelve and

fifteen years old, but including Mutton, eighteen, and Cyrus, six. Cyrus and the few others below the normal age may have been allowed to join this gang for the companionship of brothers or sisters, or some of them may have been among Baddy's own four children. Five of the gang died within the year.

Among the 528 slaves all told—284 males and 244 females—seventy-four, equally divided between the sexes, were fifty years old and upwards. If the number of the new negroes, virtually all of whom were doubtless in early life, be subtracted from the gross, it appears that one-fifth of the seasoned stock had reached the half century, and one-eighth were sixty years old and over. This is a good showing of longevity.

About eighty of the seasoned women were within the age limits of childbearing. The births entered in the chronological record averaged nine per year for the five years covered. This was hardly half as many as might have been expected under favorable conditions. Rose Price entered special note in 1795 of the number of children each woman had borne during her life, the number of these living at the time this record was made, and the number of miscarriages each woman had had. The total of births thus recorded was 345; of children then living 159; of miscarriages seventy-five. Old Quasheba and Betty Madge each had borne fifteen children; and sixteen other women had borne from six to eleven each. On the other hand, seventeen women of thirty years and upwards had had no children and no miscarriages. It cannot be said whether or not these barren women had husbands, for matings were listed in the record only in connection with the births of children.

The childbearing records of the women past middle age ran higher than those of the younger ones, to a somewhat surprising degree. Perhaps conditions on Worthy Park had been more favorable at an earlier period, when the owner and his family may possibly have been resident there. The fact that more than half of the children whom these women had borne were dead at the time of the record comports with the reputation of the sugar colonies for heavy infant mortality.<sup>5</sup> With births so infrequent and infant deaths so many it may well appear that the notorious failure of the island-bred stock to maintain its own numbers was not due to the working of the slaves to death.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Warner Bryan, attorney-general of Grenada, said, "It is generally remarked that  $\frac{1}{2}$  the children die under 2 years, and most of that  $\frac{1}{2}$  the first 9 days, from the jaw-fall." *Abridgment of the Minutes of Evidence taken before a Committee of the Whole House [on] the Slave Trade, No. 2.* (London, 1790), p. 48. Mr. John Castle, long a surgeon in Grenada, testified before the same committee that generally one-third of the negro children died in the first month of their lives, and that few of the imported women bore children. *Ibid.*, p. 80.



The poor care of the young children may be attributed largely to the absence of a white mistress, an absence characteristic of the Jamaica plantations. The only white woman mentioned in the parish returns of this estate was Susannah Phelps, doubtless the wife of Edward Phelps who drew no salary but received a yearly food allowance "for saving deficiency", and who probably lived not on Worthy Park but at Mickleton.

In addition to Rose Price, who was not salaried but who may have received a manager's commission of six per cent. upon gross crop sales as contemplated in the laws of the colony, the administrative staff of white men on Worthy Park comprised an overseer at £200, later £300 a year, and four bookkeepers at £50 to £60. There was also a white carpenter at £120, and a white ploughman at £56. The overseer was changed three times during the time of the record, and the bookkeepers were generally replaced annually. The bachelor staff were most probably responsible for the mulatto and quadroon offspring and were doubtless responsible also for the occasional manumission of women and children. In 1795 and perhaps in other years the plantation had a contract for medical attendance by "J. Quier and G. Clark" at the rate of £140 per year.

There is no true summer and winter in Jamaica, but a wet and a dry season instead—the former extending generally from May to November, the latter from December to April. The sugar-cane got its growth during the rains; it ripened and was harvested during the drought. If things went well the harvest, or "grinding", began in January. All available hands were provided with bills and sent to the fields to cut the stalks and trim off their leaves and tops. The tainted canes were laid aside for the distillery; the sound ones were sent at once to the mill. On the steepest hillsides the crop had oftentimes to be carried on the heads of the negroes or on the backs of mules to points which the carts could reach.

The mill consisted merely of three cylinders, two of them set against the third, turned by wind, water, or cattle. The canes, tied into small bundles for better compression, were given a double squeezing while passing through the mill. The juice expressed found its way through a trough into the "boiling house" while the "mill trash" or "megass"<sup>6</sup> was carted off to sheds and left to dry for later use as fuel under the coppers and stills.

In the boiling house the cane-juice flowed first into a large receptacle, the clarifier, where by treatment with lime and moderate heat it was separated from its grosser impurities. The juice then passed into the first copper, where evaporation by boiling began. This

<sup>6</sup> In Louisiana this is called "bagasse".

vessel on Worthy Park was of such a size that in 1795 one of the negroes fell in while it was full of boiling liquor and died ten days after his scalding. After further evaporation in smaller coppers the juice, now reduced to a syrup, was ladled into a final copper, the teache, for a last boiling and concentration; and when the product of the teache was ready for crystallization it was carried to the "curing house".

The mill, unless it were a most exceptional one for the time, expressed barely two-thirds of the juice from the canes; the clarifier was not supplemented by filters; the coppers were wasteful of labor and fuel. But if the apparatus and processes thus far were crude by comparison with modern standards, the curing process was primitive by any standard whatever. The curing-house was merely a roof above, a timber framework on the main level, and a great shallow sloping vat at the bottom. The syrup from the teache was potted directly into hogsheads resting on the timbers, and was allowed to cool with too great rapidity and with occasional stirrings which are said by modern critics to have hindered more than they helped the crystallization. Most of the sugar stayed in the hogsheads, while the mother liquor, molasses, still carrying some of the sugar, trickled through perforations in the hogshead bottoms into the vat below. When the hogsheads were full of the crudely cured, moist, and impure "muscovado" sugar they were headed up and sent to port. The molasses was carried to vats in the distillery where with yeast and water added it fermented and when passed twice through the distilling process yielded rum.<sup>7</sup>

The grinding season, extending from January to spring or summer according to the speed of harvesting, was the time of heaviest labor on the plantations. If the rains came before the reaping was ended the work became increasingly severe, particularly for the draught animals, which must haul their loads over the muddy fields and roads. On Worthy Park the grinding was ended in May in some years; in others it extended to July. ✕

As soon as the harvest was ended preparations were begun for replanting the fields from which the crop of third rattoons had just been taken. The chief operation in this was the opening of broad furrows or "cane holes" about six feet apart. Five ploughs were

<sup>7</sup> This description of mill equipment and methods is drawn from eighteenth-century writings. Slightly improved apparatus introduced in the early nineteenth century was described in Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*. As to sugar-cane cultivation and labor control, the general works already mentioned were supplemented by Clement Caines in his *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otahiete Cane* (London, 1801), and by an anonymous "Professional Planter" in his *Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves in the Sugar Colonies* (London, 1803).



mentioned in the Worthy Park inventories, but only three ploughmen were listed, one hired white and two negro slaves. Some of the hillside fields were doubtless too rough for convenient ploughing, and the heat of the climate prevented the use of teams for such heavy work for more than a few hours daily; but the lack of thrift and enterprise was doubtless even more influential. The smallness of the area planted each year demonstrates that the hoe was by far the main reliance. After the cane holes were made and manure spread, four canes were laid side by side continuously in each furrow, and a shallow covering of earth was drawn over them. This completed the planting process.

The holing and the planting occupied the major part of the "big gang" for most of the summer and fall. Meanwhile the wagons were hauling the sugar and rum to port, and the second and third gangs, with occasional assistance from the first, were cleaning the grass and weeds from the fields of growing cane and stripping the dry leaves from the stalks and drawing earth to the roots. With the return of the dry season cordwood must be cut in the mountains and brought to the boiling house to supplement the megass, and the roads and the works must be put in order for the stress of the coming harvest. Then came Christmas when oxen were slaughtered for the negroes and a feast was made and rules relaxed for a week of celebration by Christians and pagans alike.

Rewards for zeal in service were given chiefly to the "drivers" or gang foremen. Each of these had for example a "doubled milled cloth coloured great coat" costing 11s.6d. and a "fine bound hat with girdle and buckle" costing 10s.6d. As a more direct and frequent stimulus a quart of rum was served weekly to each of three drivers, three carpenters, four boilers, two head cattlemen, two head mulemen, the "stoke-hole boatswain", and the black doctor, and to the foremen respectively of the sawyers, coopers, blacksmiths, watchmen, and road wainmen, and a pint weekly to the head home wainman, the potter, the midwife, and the young children's field nurse. These allowances totalled about three hundred gallons yearly. But a considerably greater quantity than this was distributed, mostly at Christmas perhaps, for in 1796 for example 922 gallons were recorded of "rum used for the negroes on the estate". Upon the birth of each child the mother was given a Scotch rug and a silver dollar.

No records of whippings appear to have been kept, nor of crimes or misdemeanors except absconding. In the list of deaths for 1793, however, it was noted that Roman was shot and killed by a watch-

man on a neighboring estate while stealing provisions from the negro grounds.

The runaway slaves who were in hiding at the end of each quarter were usually listed in a quarterly report to the parish authorities. In 1792 none were reported until the end of the year when it was stated that two were out, a man and a woman, the names not given. In March, 1793, these had returned, but Greenwich, May, and Beneba's Cuffee, men, and the woman called Strumpet had run off. The June report for this year is missing. In September, Greenwich, May, and Strumpet had returned, and Boot Cudjoe, Nero, Spring Garden Quaw, Toney, and Abba's Moll had taken flight. In December Toney and Quaw had returned. London and Rumbold, a twelve-year-old boy, had now fled, but they came back within the next quarter. In the early months of 1794 Sam, October, Pilot, and Christian Grace had brief outings, and in the second quarter Ann and Prince; and Cesar and Rhino now added their names to the list of the long-term runaways. In the third quarter Pulteney and Rippon, and in the fourth Dickie, made brief escapes, while Ann made a second and longer flight. Early in 1795 three runaways, veterans in a double sense for each was sixty years old, came back whether willingly or as captives. They were Sam a field hand, Boot Cudjoe a cattleman, and Abba's Moll, whose task was the mending of pads. Fletcher, Billy Scott, and Spring Garden Roger now took flight, and Quaw for a second time. In February Billy Scott, along with Moses and Hester who were attempting escape, were taken up and lodged in a public workhouse and sent back to the estate when claimed, at an expense of £4.11s.4¾d. In May £2.6s.2½d. was paid to the supervisor of the workhouse at Spanish Town as jail fees for Beneba's Cuffee; but his name continued to appear in the plantation list of runaways. Perhaps he promptly departed again. In the second quarter the long-absconding Cesar was also returned, and Spring Garden Tom took flight.

The recaptured absconders were now put into a special "vaga-bond gang" for better surveillance. This comprised Billy Scott, reduced from the capacity of mason and sugar guard; Oxford who as head cooper had enjoyed a weekly quart of rum but had apparently betrayed a special trust; Cesar who had followed the sawyer's trade; and Moll and Rumbold, and the following whose names had not appeared in the quarterly lists: McLean, Green, Bob, Damsel, Polly, and the young boys Little Sam and Mulatto Robert. The gang was so wretchedly assorted for industrial purposes that it was probably not long before it was disbanded and its members distributed to more proper tasks.

In the runaway list for the third quarter of 1795 three new names appear—Frank, Reilly, and Rennals. In November Appea fled, and Toney went upon a second truancy. Toney returned in January, 1796, and left for the third time the next month. About this time Sam, Strumpet, and Prince began second outings, but returned in the spring along with Beneba's Cuffee. Rightwell and Rosey now took short flights, and in November Sam took a third leave which again proved a brief one. In February, 1797, Quadroon Charles ran off, and Rumbold for the second time. At the end of the next month, when the last of the runaway lists in this record was made, these two were still out, along with Nero who had fled in 1793, Fletcher and Appea in 1795, and Toney in 1796. Of these Fletcher was a distempered watchman forty-five years old, and the others were members of the big gang, forty-five, thirty, and sixty years old respectively. Obviously the impulse to run away was not confined to either sex nor to any age or class. The fugitives were utterly miscellaneous and their flights were apparently not organized but sporadic.

These conclusions if extended into a generalization to cover the whole island would appear to be borne out by an analysis of the notices of runaway slaves published by the workhouse officials in the newspapers. Throughout the year 1803, for which I have procured these statistics from a file of the *Royal Gazette* of Kingston,<sup>8</sup> the number of runaways taken into custody each week was fairly constant; and no group of slaves appears over-represented. Of the grand total of 1721 runaways advertised as in custody, 187 were merely stated to be negroes without further classification, 426 were "creoles", *i. e.*, native Jamaicans; and the neighboring islands had scattering representations. Sixty per cent. (1046) were of African birth. Of these 101 were Mandingoes from Senegambia and the upper Niger; sixty were Chambas from the region since known as Liberia; seventy were Coromantees from the Gold Coast; thirty-three were Nagoes and twenty-four Pawpaws from the Slave Coast (Dahomey); and one hundred and eighty-five were Eboes and ninety-seven Mocoos from the Bight of Benin. All of the foregoing were from regions north of the equator. From the southern tropic there were one hundred and eighty-five Congoes, one hundred and sixty-five Mungolas, and ninety-four Angolas. The remaining thirty were scattering and mostly from places which I have not been able to identify in maps old or new. Only one, a Gaza, was positively from the east coast of Africa.

<sup>8</sup> A file for 1803 is preserved in the Charleston Library, Charleston, S. C. The tabulation here used was generously made for me by Dr. Charles S. Boucher of the University of Michigan.



The Congoes and Coromantees, the tribal stocks with which Worthy Park was chiefly concerned, were as wide apart in their characteristics as negro nature permitted. The former were noted for lightness of heart, mildness of temper, and dullness of intellect. Of the latter Christopher Codrington, governor of the Leeward Islands, wrote in 1701 to the British Board of Trade:

The Corramantes . . . are not only the best and most faithful of our slaves, but are really all born Heroes. There is a difference between them and all other negroes beyond what 'tis possible for your Lordships to conceive. There never was a raskal or coward of that nation, intrepid to the last degree, not a man of them but will stand to be cut to pieces without a sigh or groan, grateful and obedient to a kind master, but implacably revengeful when ill-treated. My Father, who had studied the genius and temper of all kinds of negroes 45 years with a very nice observation, would say, Noe man deserved a Corramante that would not treat him like a Friend rather than a Slave.<sup>9</sup>

Bryan Edwards endorsed the staunchness and industry of the Coromantees, but attributed to them the plotting of the serious Jamaica revolt of 1760.

A large proportion of the fugitive slaves in custody were described as bearing brands on their breasts or shoulders. It is not surprising to find in a Worthy Park inventory "1 silver mark LP for negroes". Edwards wrote that a friend of his who had bought a parcel of young Ebo and Coromantee boys told him that at the branding,

when the first boy, who happened to be one of the Eboes, and the stoutest of the whole, was led forward to receive the mark, he screamed dreadfully, while his companions of the same nation manifested strong emotions of sympathetic terror. The gentleman stopt his hand; but the Koromantyn boys, laughing aloud, and, immediately coming forward of their own accord, offered their bosoms undauntedly to the brand, and receiving its impression without flinching in the least, snapt their fingers in exultation over the poor Eboes.<sup>10</sup>

The prevalence of unusually cruel customs among the tribes of the Gold Coast<sup>11</sup> may account in part for the fortitude of the Coromantees.

Worthy Park bought nearly all of its hardware, dry goods, drugs, and sundries in London, and its herrings for the negroes and salt pork and beef for the white staff in Cork. Staves and heading were procured locally, but hoops were imported. Corn was cultivated

<sup>9</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*, 1701, pp. 720-721.

<sup>10</sup> Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (Philadelphia, 1806), II. 275, 276.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), chap. XI.

between the rows in some of the cane fields on the plantation, and some guinea-corn was bought from neighbors. The negroes raised their own yams and other vegetables, and doubtless pigs and poultry as well. Plantains were likely to be plentiful, and the island abounded in edible land crabs.

Every October cloth was issued, at the rate of seven yards of osnaburgs, three of checks, and three of baize for each adult, and proportionately for children. The first was to be made into coats, trousers, and frocks, the second into shirts and waists, the third into bedclothes. The cutting and sewing were done in the cabins. A hat and a cap were also issued to each slave old enough to go to the field, and a clasp-knife to each one above the age of the third gang. The slaves' feet were not pinched by shoes.

The Irish provisions cost annually about £300, and the English supplies about £1000, not including such extra outlays as that of £1355 in 1793 for new stills, worms, and coppers. Local expenditures were probably reckoned in currency. Converted into sterling, the salary list amounted to about £500, and the local outlay for medical services, wharfage, and petty supplies came to a like amount. Taxes, manager's commissions, and the depreciation of apparatus must have amounted collectively to £800. The net death-loss of slaves, not including that from the breaking-in of new negroes, averaged about two and a quarter per cent.; that of the mules and oxen ten per cent. When reckoned upon the numbers on hand in 1796 when the plantation, with 470 slaves, was operating with no outside help, these losses, which must be replaced by new purchases if the scale of output was to be maintained, amounted to about £900. Thus a total of £3000 sterling is reached as the average current expense in years when no mishaps occurred.

The crops during the years of the record averaged 311 hogsheads of sugar, sixteen hundredweight each, worth in the island about £15 sterling per hogshead,<sup>12</sup> and 133 puncheons of rum, 110 gallons each, worth about £10 per puncheon. The value of the average crop was thus about £6000, and the net earnings of the establishment not above £3000. The investment in slaves, mules, and oxen was about £28,000, and that in land, buildings, and equipment, according to the general reckoning of the island authorities, reached a similar sum.<sup>13</sup> The net earnings in good years were thus barely more than five per

<sup>12</sup> Owing to bad seasons, the crop on Worthy Park in 1796 fell to 268 hogsheads; but the shortness of the crop at large caused an exceptional rise in sugar prices, which kept plantation earnings that year at least as high as the normal.

<sup>13</sup> In the dearth of original data on Jamaica prices of land, slaves, and produce, I have depended mainly on Bryan Edwards (vol. III., book V., chapter 3), after checking up his figures as far as has been practicable.



cent. on the investment; but the liability to hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, epidemics, and mutinies would lead conservative investors to reckon the safe expectations considerably lower. A mere pestilence which carried off about sixty mules and two hundred oxen on Worthy Park in 1793-1794 wiped out more than a year's earnings.

Bryan Edwards<sup>14</sup> gave statistics showing that between 1772 and 1791 more than one-third of the 767 sugar plantations in Jamaica had gone through bankruptcy, fifty-five had been abandoned, and forty-seven new ones established. It was generally agreed that, within the limits of efficient operation, the larger a plantation was, the better its prospect for net earnings. But though Worthy Park had more than twice the number of slaves that the average plantation employed, it was barely paying its way.

ULRICH B. PHILLIPS.

<sup>14</sup> Edwards, vol. I., book II., appendix 2.





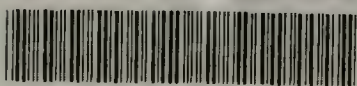








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